

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-12

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE FRANKFURT 6907

FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: HESSEN ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND PROSPECTS

REF: FRANKFURT'S A-205, OCTOBER 7, 1974

1. SUMMARY: WITH ONLY FOUR DAYS TO GO BEFORE OCTOBER 27
BALLOTING IN HESSEN LANDTAG ELECTIONS, IT IS CLEAR
THAT FEARS ABOUT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, CONTINUED
PUBLICITY ON GOVERNMENT "SCANDALS" IN BONN AND WIESBADEN,
FDP ATTEMPTS TO DISASSOCIATE THE SMALLER COALITION
PARTY FROM CONTROVERSIAL SPD POLICIES AND PERSONALITIES,
AND ANOTHER INSTANCE OF STREET VIOLENCE IN
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FRANKFURT HAVE PLAYED INTO CDU HANDS AND KEPT SPD ON

DEFENSIVE. CDU CHAIRMAN DREGGER HAS BEEN MOST EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNER OF ANY PARTY, AND CDU IS SEEN TO HAVE BUILT UP POWERFUL PARTY ORGANIZATION AND TO HAVE BEST LED AND COORDINATED CAMPAIGN. BY CONTRAST, SPD APPEARS CONFUSED, DISUNITED AND PERHAPS COMPLACENT AFTER 28 YEARS IN OFFICE. CDU EXPECTED TO EMERGE FOR FIRST TIME AS LARGEST PARTY, BUT SPD/FDP COALITION SHOULD REMAIN IN OFFICE. END SUMMARY.

2. OPINION POLLS AND INSIDERS OF ALL THREE PARTIES EXPECT CDU TO EMERGE AS STRONGEST SINGLE PARTY WITH SOMETHING LIKE 47 PERCENT, UP MORE THAN SEVEN PERCENT FROM 1972. (SENIOR CDU FUNCTIONARY TOLD US THAT PARTY COULD ACHIEVE ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF SEATS WITH AS LITTLE AS 48.5 PERCENT.) AN ACHIEVEMENT OF SUCH DIMENSION WOULD RENEW DREGGER'S CLAIM TO GREATER INFLUENCE IN CDU NATIONAL AFFAIRS. IN RARE APPEARANCE IN HESSEN CAMPAIGN, CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT PREDICTED THAT DREGGER WOULD JOIN RANKS OF CDU CHANCELLOR CANDIDATES. CONSTANT AND VIRULENT ATTACKS ON DREGGER BY JUSOS AND OTHER LEFTISTS HAVE REINFORCED DREGGER'S CLAIM TO BE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO PRESENT HESSEN GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP.

3. MINISTER-PRESIDENT OSSWALD, WHOM POLL LAST SUMMER SHOWED TO BE TWICE AS WELL KNOWN IN HESSEN AS DREGGER, HAS FORFEITED MUCH OF INCUMBENT'S ADVANTAGE BY REACTING DEFENSIVELY AND WITH OBVIOUSLY WOUNDED PRIDE TO SKILLFUL AND LARGELY SUCCESSFUL EFFORT BY CDU TO BRAND HIM WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOSSES OF LANDESBANK (HELABA), OF WHICH HE EX-OFFICIO CHAIRMAN. ALTHOUGH HE FIRED BANK PRESIDENT (WHO HAS BEEN OFFERED CHAIR AT HARVARD) WHEN LOSSES CAME TO LIGHT, OSSWALD'S ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN LIMITED INSIGHT AND AUTHORITY OF CHAIRMAN IN BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS MERELY MAKE HIM LOOK INEFFECTUAL AND PITIABLE, NEITHER OF WHICH STRENGTHENS VOTER CONFIDENCE.

4. SPD LANDTAG FACTION CHAIRMAN GOERLACH, NOMINALLY CAMPAIGN LEADER, HAS OPENLY CRITICIZED SOME CAMPAIGN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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METHODS OF FRANKFURT SPD. LANDTAG DEPUTY NITZLING, TREASURER OF FRANKFURT SPD, HAS BEEN QUOTED IN NEWS-PAPERS AS CRITICIZING ELECTION PLANNING AND PREPARATIONS (OR LACK OF SAME) BY PARTY AND FACTION LEADERS. THE ONLY SPD CAMPAIGNER WHO HAS BEEN WILLING OR ABLE TO DEFEND EDUCATION MINISTER VON FRIEDEBURG AND HIS POLICIES IS FRIEDERBURG HIMSELF. OSSWALD'S REFUSAL TO SAY WHETHER HE WILL ASK

FRIEDEBURG TO REMAIN IN OFFICE FUELS THE IMPRESSION THAT HE CONSIDERS THE BEST KNOWN MEMBER OF HIS CABINET AN ELECTORAL LIABILITY. NEVERTHELESS, POLLS GIVE THE SPD ABOUT 43 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, DOWN 2-3 PERCENT FROM 1970.

5. FDP HAS PLAYED STRANGE ROLE IN CAMPAIGN IN APPARENT EFFORT TO PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN COALITION PARTNERS WHILE LEAVING UNTOUCHED THE BASIC COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE TO GOVERNMENT WITH SPD. ECONOMICS MINISTER KARRY'S RESIGNATION FROM HELABA BOARD ON GROUND THAT OSSWALD HAD FAILED TO KEEP HIM ADEQUATELY INFORMED ADDED CREDIBILITY TO CDU CHARGES OF MISMANAGEMENT AND UNDERMINED OSSWALD'S PERSONAL POSITION.

6. FDP LANTAG FACTION CHAIRMAN STEIN AND EDUCATION SPOKESMAN BRANS LAST WEEK LEAPED ON FRIEDEBURG FOR ALLEGEDLY STATING THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD RECOGNIZE INTEGRATED COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL AS STANDARD IN 1975. ALTHOUGH FDP SEES COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL AS FUTURE GOAL, THEY CLAIMED COALITION HAD NOT AGREED TO FORMAL APPROVAL OF THIS EXPERIMENTAL SYSTEM AND THAT FRIEDEBURG'S STATEMENT SHOWED HE COULD NOT RESPONSIBLY LEAD MINISTRY IN NEW GOVERNMENT. STEIN AND BRANS WERE PROMPTLY CRITICIZED BY JUDOS FOR GIVING IMPRESSION THAT FDP WAS WAVERING ON ITS COMMITMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS AS POLICY GOAL. FRIEDEBURG ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN THAT HE HAD MERELY SUGGESTED TIME HAD COME TO GRANT LEGAL EQUALITY TO COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS ALONGSIDE OTHER APPROVED FORMS, BUT IMPRESSION REMAINED THAT FDP SOUGHT TO WIN VOTES BY INFERRING IT WILL BLOCK FRIEDEBURG'S REAPPOINTMENT.

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7. SINCE POLLS INDICATE FDP SHOULD RETAIN ROUGHLY TEN PERCENT IT WON IN 1970, CONTINUATION OF PRESENT COALITION - WITH FDP'S RELATIVE POSITION SOMEWHAT STRENGTHENED - APPEARS MOST LIKELY OUTCOME. ALTHOUGH COALITION PARTIES DO NOT TRADITIONALLY INTERFERE WITH STAFFING OF EACH OTHER'S POSTS, STRENGTHENED FDP COULD DEMAND ADDITIONAL STATE SECRETARYSHIP IN EDUCATION MINISTRY FOR ITS NOMINEE AND ALSO INSIST ON POLICY ASSURANCES WHICH COULD MAKE FRIEDEBURG'S POSITION UNTENABLE.

8. AT 8 P.M. LAST FRIDAY 100 PERSONS OCCUPIED EMPTY BUILDING NEAR UNIVERSITY BELONGING TO FRANKFURT SCHOOL SYSTEM AND DEMANDED IT BE CONVERTED TO YOUTH CENTER. POLICE MOVED IN PROMPTLY, AND IN STRUGGLE WHICH LASTED

UNTIL 3 A.M. THEY ARRESTED 250 DEMONSTRATORS, INCLUDING OCCUPANTS. A HALF DOZEN POLICE WERE INJURED AND CONSIDERABLE PROPERTY DAMAGE WAS SUFFERED. ALTHOUGH KPD AND KBW WERE AMONG SPONSORS, LOCAL SPD CHAPTERS - AS USUAL - ISSUED STATEMENT SYMPATHIZING WITH OCCUPANTS AND CONDEMNING POLICY. LORD MAYOR ARNDT AND POLICY CHIEF MUELLER CRITICIZED THE JUDGE FOR RELEASING ALL THOSE ARRESTED, INCLUDING TWO IDENTIFIED AS HAVING ATTACKED POLICEMENT. ARNDT ALSO STATED THAT THE CITY HAD ANNOUNCED THREE WEEKS AGO THAT THE BUILDING WOULD BE PARTIALLY CONVERTED TO A YOUGH CENTER.

9. THE WHOLE EXERCISE THUS APPEARED SOMEWHAT VAIN. THE LEFTISTS PRESUMABLY WANTED TO REMIND ANYONE DIVERTED BY THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN THAT THEY ARE AS PREPARED AS EVER TO DEFY AUTHORITY, AND ARNDT TOOK THE OPPORTUNTIIY TO REINFORCE HIS IMAGE AS A TOUGH ADMINSTRATOR READY TO TAKE THE CONSEQUENCES. NET EFFECT, HOWEVER, WAS PROBABLY TO STRENGTHEN DREGGER'S POINT THAT FRANKFURT HAS BECOME A CITY OF FREQUENT DISTURBANCES IN WHICH PEOPLE AND PROPERTY ARE NOT SAFE, A SITUATION WHICH HE SOMEHOW WOULD CORRECT.

10. IN A TV PANEL PROGRAM OCTOBER 22 ON HESSEN'S CHANNEL 3, OSSWALD, DREGGER, AND WOLFGANG MISCHNIK, AS THE LAND CHAIRMEN OF THEIR RESPECTIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PARTIES, IN A RARE MOMENT OF UNANIMITY AND IN RESPONSE TO THE MODERATOR'S FINAL QUESTION, ALL AGREED WITH THE PROJECTION SET FORTH ABOVE. OSSWALD SAID HE EXPECTED THE COALITION TO CONTINUE TIN OFFICE; DREGGER SAID HE EXPECTED CDU TO EMERGE AS THE STRONGEST PARTY; AND MISCHNIK SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE FDP WOULD HOLD ITS OWN AND GARNER AT LEAST TEN PERCENT OF THE VOTES AND PERHAPS A LITTLE BIT MORE.HARLAN

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